



DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.  
Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

Board of Supervisors

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February 27, 2006

TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: David Sanders, Ph.D.   
Director

**APRIL 26, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #22: REFUGIO PARA NIÑOS MONTHLY REPORT**

As the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has been charged with providing monthly reports of Refugio Foster Family Agency (Refugio) to the Board, the following summarizes the monitoring visit conducted by DCFS, Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD), and fiscal reports from the Auditor-Controller (A-C) and DCFS Fiscal Monitoring and Special Payments Section, which outline the activities for January 2006.

**FISCAL ISSUES**

The DCFS Fiscal Monitoring and Special Payments Section reported that Refugio submitted its January 2006 monthly expenditure report timely, there were no issues to report and they are up to date on their repayment plan. Refugio's monthly expenditure report is attached (Attachment I).

The A-C's Audit Division conducted a more in-depth fiscal monitoring review of Refugio. The issuance of a final written report is pending.



### **DCFS MONITORING VISITS**

Refugio has 114 certified foster homes where 242 children are currently placed.

As reported in the January 26, 2006 report to the Board, on January 9, 2006, Refugio was placed on Administrative Hold status for up to 45 days based on the DCFS' monitoring and the A-C's programmatic findings. It was also reported that a Review Conference had been scheduled for January 25, 2006 with representatives from Refugio.

The persons present at the Review Conference from Refugio were Tomás Fernández, (who was then the Executive Director), Roland Navarro, Chief Financial Officer, Cynthia Jones, Administrator, Gayle Thomas, Supervising Social Worker, and Mike Brown, Board Member from Refugio. Also present were Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, Elizabeth A. Howard, CSA III, Néstor Figueroa, CSA II, and Darío Villamarín, CSA I from DCFS.

During the Review Conference, Mrs. Howard identified DCFS' concerns about whether the January 20, 2006 Corrective Action Plan (CAP) submitted by Refugio adequately and promptly addressed the Auditor-Controller's findings in their report dated December 30, 2005. In particular, there were overall systemic issues with regard to some of the noted findings which Refugio did not address in the CAP. At the Review Conference, Refugio presented a January 23, 2006 written addendum to the CAP and verbally presented further details about the system issues addressed in the written addendum and some newly designed forms to effectuate the quality assurance measures outlined.

Refugio made two requests of DCFS at the Review Conference: 1) to lift the Administrative Hold; and 2) to grant them an exception allowing certified foster parents who have been certified less than one year to provide care for more than two children because the agency specializes in sibling groups.

After attending the Review Conference, examining Refugio's submissions in response to the findings, and discussing the submissions with the Auditor-Controller's office, it was the conclusion of DCFS to place Refugio's FFA program on Do Not Refer status for a minimum of 90 days, pending successful completion of the corrective actions discussed at the January 25th Review Conference. Regarding the second request, DCFS will not render a final decision until the OHCMD and the A-C conduct reviews. When the reviews are completed, a determination will be made regarding lifting the Do Not Refer status.

On February 7, 2005, Refugio's Board Member, Mike Brown reported to the OHCMD that as of the date, Tomás Fernández was no longer employed by Refugio, and the position of Executive Director was filled by Gayle Thomas. On February 10, 2006, our Monitor was provided with documentation that Ms. Thomas had been appointed as the new Executive Director.



On February 7, 2005, Refugio was placed on Administrative Do Not Refer. On this same date, Refugio was verbally informed, and a letter was faxed and sent via certified mail notifying Refugio of the Do Not Refer status.

On February 10, 2006, the DCFS Monitor conducted a site visit to Refugio. During the visit, ten currently placed children and four discharged children's files were reviewed. It was noted that Refugio made improvements with regard to the Needs and Services Plans (N&SP). The N&SPs were now more detailed and presented a more complete picture of the children since the agency revamped the forms and included the Contract's required elements. Additionally, one of our recommendations concerning documenting that age-appropriate children are being provided with emancipation services was implemented in the N&SPs. We also noted that the discharge summary was more detailed and indicated the reason children are terminated for services; this was also one of our recommendations.

Refugio's Quality Assurance supervisor and new Executive Director pointed out that the agency has been conducting spot checks on its certified foster homes. The agency indicated during the Review Conference that they would do this to ensure that the homes meet Community Care Licensing (CCL) standards. We were provided with documentation verifying the spot checks.

Copies of the Administrative Do Not Refer notification letter to Refugio and the letter of appointment of Mrs. Thomas as Refugio's new Executive Director are attached (Attachments II and III).

### **SAFETY**

In preparation for monitoring for the safety outcome, the DCFS Monitor researched OHCMD's I-track database to query for Special Incident Reports (SIR) and CWS/CMS Child Protection Hotline (CPHL) from January 15, 2005 to February 15, 2006.

There were two CPHL referrals. The first referral, dated February 9, 2006, reported that a 14-year-old female child was under the influence of alcohol and picked up by the Northridge Police Department. The child was intoxicated when the police brought her to the foster home. The foster mother contacted Refugio's Social Worker to inform him of the incident. Later that day, the child disclosed to the foster mother that she had been "violated." However, the foster mother did not immediately report this disclosure to Refugio, the DCFS CSW, the CPHL, or the police. Furthermore, the foster mother did not take the child to the hospital for a medical examination until the following afternoon.

The outcome of the above mentioned referral is still under investigation by the DCFS CSW. However, our Monitor noted that the foster mother named in the referral had been previously investigated on allegations of child abuse to foster children while certified by another FFA, with some of the allegations deemed substantiated. This



foster mother was subsequently de-certified by the former FFA. Upon review of the file, we noted that the foster mother was not truthful to Refugio when she applied for certification with the agency. She did not indicate in the home study that she had been de-certified by another FFA. This information, and the fact that the foster mother failed to notify Refugio of the child's disclosure that she had been "violated," was shared with Refugio's Executive Director during a site visit on February 13, 2006. On February 15, 2006, Refugio's Executive Director notified the OHCMD that the agency decided to de-certify this foster mother. As of February 22, 2006 the agency was continuing to work with the DCFS CSWs to replace the children.

The second referral, dated February 13, 2006, indicated that a 12-year-old child, who had weekend visits with her biological mother, was not returned to the foster home after the authorized visit. The foster mother called the local police who did not take a report. However, the police went to the child's biological mother's address and they were told that the child's mother no longer lived there. A missing child report was filed. The foster mother and Refugio reported the incident timely and it was appropriately handled. The outcome of the above mentioned referral is still under investigation by DCFS. The CSW's contact notes do not indicate the child's current whereabouts.

Although there were two CPHL referrals, no trends of abuse/neglect were noted for this period of review.

OHCMD found that Refugio has been reporting special incidents in accordance with the reporting requirements as stipulated in the Contract, Section 10.0, Program Reporting Requirements. For this reporting period (January 15, 2006 to February 15, 2006), Refugio filed 20 SIRs. Our current review indicates that the types of incidents reported to take place are not unusual.

However, it is important to note that one of the SIRs indicated that two teenage female children ran away for a couple of hours from the foster home. The children went to a local fast food restaurant where a shooting took place and one of the teenage girls was shot on her shoulder. Although the injury was not life threatening, the child was taken to the hospital for treatment. It appears that the children were at the wrong place at the wrong time as they were reportedly not acquaintances to the people involved in the shooting. The foster mother and Refugio reported the incident timely and it was appropriately handled. The CPHL determined that a referral did not need to be generated.

### **BOARD STRUCTURE**

Refugio's CAP requires that the agency's Board of Directors consists of seven members at all times.



- On February 13, 2005, Refugio's Executive Director reported that their Board has seven members, which was confirmed by the OHCMD. Therefore, Refugio has complied with the CAP (Exhibit U) to have seven Board Members.
- Refugio held a Board meeting on January 17, 2006. A review of the Board meeting minutes for this date reflects that the Board reviewed SIRs as required per Title 22, FFA regulations, Section 88063(8), as recommended by the OHCMD.

### **CONCLUSION**

Our scope of review is limited to this Board order and monitoring of performance with regard to safety. However, in consultation with the A-C, on February 7, 2006, DCFS placed Refugio on Do Not Refer status for up to 90 days pending further reviews by DCFS and the A-C in order to verify compliance with the recommendations made by these two Departments.

During our site visit, we noted some improvement with regard to the quality of the N&SPs, as they are more detailed. However, we feel that more improvement is needed. Refugio's management and Quality Assurance staff must ensure that the agency's supervising Social Workers and Social Workers are fully familiar with the Contract and Title 22 regulations to fully comply with our recommendations.

Although Refugio is cooperating with the A-C and DCFS, the alternative plan of action remains the same as follows, if needed:

### **Alternative Plan of Action**

- Every effort will be made to maintain the children with the same foster parents to avoid placement disruption.
- CSWs who have children placed with Refugio will be instructed to make immediate and regular visits of the children in the Refugio foster homes. If the children's safety is in question, the CSWs will take appropriate action that may include replacing the children.
- The Refugio foster parents will be informed immediately by telephone and letter of the pending termination of the contract with Refugio and the County's plan to review various options with them regarding their ability to continue care of DCFS children placed with them.
- In collaboration with Community Care Licensing (CCL), a meeting will be scheduled immediately with all foster parents where they will be informed of their options to associate themselves with another Foster Family Agency or become licensed foster parents with the State.



- The foster parents will be told to continue to utilize the services of their Agency social worker. If they are not receiving the services from Refugio and/or if safety situations arise, they will be instructed to contact the child's CSW immediately.
- During this entire process, DCFS will be working closely with CCL to consider various options, such as certifying foster parents pending licensure or certification, in the event the contract with Refugio requires immediate termination.

If you have any questions please call me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:LP:ES  
EH:dv

#### Attachments

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
Auditor Controller  
County Counsel  
Board of Supervisors Executive Officer



## ATTACHMENT I

EXHIBIT E

# DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

## FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY SEMI-ANNUAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Agency Name : REFUGIO PARA NINO

Report Period: January 2005

Agency Address: 100 N. Citrus St. Suite 205, West Covina, CA 91791 - 1614

Contact Person: Gayle Thomas - CEO

Phone: (626) 858 -8684

## A. REVENUES:

Sources	(4) Total for Months	(5) Year-to-Date
1. AFDC-FC FFA Revenues	\$ 370,954.00	\$ 370,954.00
2. Other Governmental Revenues (Interest, Gain/Losses on Inv.)	\$ -	\$ -
3. Total Revenues	\$ 370,954.00	\$ 370,954.00

## B. CONTRACT EXPENDITURES

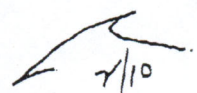
Expenditure Categories	1 Allowable	2 Unallowable	3 Personal	(4) Total for 6 Months (Sum of Co. 1	(5) Year-to-Date
1. Administrative Payroll (Total)					
a. Executive Director's Salary	9,118.00	-	-	9,118.00	9,118.00
b. Clinical Director's Salary	-	-	-	-	-
c. Administrator Salary	5,083.34	-	-	5,083.34	5,083.34
d. Other Administrative Salaries	36,284.22	-	-	36,284.22	36,284.22
2. Recruitment Payroll					
3. Training Payroll	-	-	-	-	-
4. Administrative Contracts					
5. Telephone and Telegraph	5,992.61	-	-	5,992.61	5,992.61
6. Postage and Freight	378.52	-	-	378.52	378.52
7. Office Supplies	6,347.38	-	-	6,347.38	6,347.38
8. Conferences, Meetings	-	-	-	-	-
9. Memberships, Subscriptions/Dues	875.00	-	-	875.00	875.00
10. Printing & Publications	-	-	-	-	-
11. Bonding, Insurance Premiums	11,167.59	-	-	11,167.59	11,167.59
12. Advertising	3,834.94	-	-	3,834.94	3,834.94
13. Miscellaneous	47,398.96	-	-	47,398.96	47,398.96
Subtotal	126,480.56	-	-	126,480.56	126,480.56



Expenditure Categories	1 Allowable	2 Unallowable	3 Personal	(4) Total for 6 Months (Sum of Co. 1	(5) Year-to-Date
14. Building and Equipment Payroll				17,392.02	17,392.02
15. Building Rents and Leases	17,392.02	-	-	-	-
16. Principal and Interest				-	-
17. Property Appraisal Fees				-	-
18. Property Taxes				-	-
19. Equipment and Property Ins.				-	-
20. Utilities				-	-
21. Building Maintenance				-	-
22. Building & Equipment Contracts				-	-
23. Building & Equipment Supplies				2,730.34	2,730.34
24. Equipment Leases	2,730.34			-	-
25. Depreciation Expenses				809.01	809.01
26. Non-Depreciable Equipment	809.01			-	-
27. Building & Equipment Misc.				-	-
28. Vehicle Leases				-	-
29. Vehicle Depreciation				9,462.25	9,462.25
30. Vehicle Operating Costs	9,462.25				
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>30,393.62</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30,393.62</b>	<b>30,393.62</b>

31. Total Paid to CFH	172,284.43	-	-	172,284.43	172,284.43
32. Other Child Related Costs	6,791.39	-	-	6,791.39	6,791.39
33. Social Worker Payroll	97,725.65	-	-	97,725.65	97,725.65
34. Social Worker Contracts	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>276,801.47</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>276,801.47</b>	<b>276,801.47</b>

<b>35. Total Expenditures</b>	<b>433,675.65</b>	<b>433,675.65</b>
<b>36. Excess Revenues / Expenditures in Excess of Revenues</b>	<b>(62,721.65)</b>	<b>(62,721.65)</b>
<b>37. Less: Revenues from Other Governmental Sources</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>(Section A, Line 2, Column 4)</b>		
<b>38. Unexpended AFDC-FC-FFA Funds/Expenditures in Excess</b>	<b>(62,721.65)</b>	<b>(62,721.65)</b>
<b>of AFDC-FC FFA Revenues</b>		





C. Briefly describe services rendered during the reporting period as required in the Agency's Program Statement

A	Our Program provide the special services needed to nurture children to their fullest mental, emotional and spiritual development
B	RPN's Management and Social Workers worked with all Foster Parents access resources, coordinate services and create an individualized treatment plan for each child.
C	RPN assists and support all Foster Parents in providing foster children's emotional and financial care towards the goal of healthy development of a child.

D. Please indicate any difficulties encountered rendering services and/or complying with the Program Statement. Please indicate any such differences that could jeopardize the timeliness of placement or care provided to a child.

- NONE -

I hereby certify to the best of my knowledge, under penalty of perjury, that the above is true and correct, that all amounts are traceable to Agency accounting records, and that all AFDC-FC monies received for the purposes of this program were spent in accordance with the agreement and all applicable Federal, State and County laws and regulations. Falsification of any amount disclosed herein shall constitute a false claim pursuant to the California Government Code, Section 12650 et seq.

Garth Thomas  
Executive Director

2-10-06  
Date

Accounting Cycle: = Calendar Year

Begins: January 2006 Ends: December 2006

Accounting Basis: = Accrual



## MISCELLANEOUS ACCTS.

	MONTHLY	CUMULATIVE
Executive Pension	-	-
Payroll Taxes	25,299.95	25,299.95
Health Insurance	14,971.12	14,971.12
Workers Comp	(430.91)	(430.91)
Employee Pension	1,500.26	1,500.26
Accounting & Prof.	33.16	33.16
Consultant Expense	1,000.00	1,000.00
Legal Fees	4,324.63	4,324.63
Administrative Expenses	700.75	700.75
Bank Fees	-	-
Continuing Ed	-	-
Penalties	-	-
Recruitment Expense	-	-
Taxes & Licenses	-	-
TOTAL	<u>47,398.96</u>	<u>47,398.96</u>



**ATTACHMENT II**

DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.  
Director

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February 7, 2006

Dr. Tomás Fernández, Executive Director  
Refugio Para Niños Foster Family Agency  
100 N. Citrus Street, Suite 205  
West Covina, Ca. 91791

Dear Mr. Fernández

**NOTICE OF PLACEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE "DO NOT REFER" (DNR) ON  
REFUGIO PARA NIÑOS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

This is in response to the January 25, 2006 Review Conference meeting held at the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). We have consulted with the Auditor-Controller's (A-C) Office and reviewed the Refugio FFA (Refugio) Corrective Action Plan (CAP), dated January 20, 2006 and the addenda dated January 23, and 25, 2006. The A-C has approved Refugio's CAP and addenda with the condition that all the recommendations are fully implemented within 90 days (May 1, 2006) and maintained on an ongoing basis.

Over the next 90 days, DCFS staff will monitor Refugio's progress on implementing the recommendations contained in the A-C's December 30, 2005 program audit report. In May 2006, the A-C's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division staff plan to conduct a follow up review to determine if the recommendations were appropriately implemented. In June 2006, the A-C will issue a report on the outcome of their review. DCFS plans to evaluate Refugio's Do Not Refer status based on the results of the A-C's follow-up review, and the findings of DCFS's enhanced monitoring between now and then. Failure to comply and fully maintain your CAP may lead to placing Refugio on a "Do Not Use" status.



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### **REASONS FOR REQUESTED ACTION**

- On December 30, 2005, the A-C's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division issued a program audit report (Attached). The report identified several programmatic issues that impacted the children's quality of care. The report noted that Refugio needed to immediately improve their oversight of their foster homes. In addition, Refugio needed to improve the quality of the children's Needs and Services Plans and the other tools used to monitor the safety and well-being of the children placed under their care. As a result of the issues noted in this report, we placed Refugio on Administrative Hold on January 9, 2006.

### **REVIEW CONFERENCE**

A review conference was held on January 25, 2006. The persons present at the Conference from Refugio were Tomas Fernandez, Executive Director; Roland Navarro, Chief Financial Officer; Cynthia Jones, Administrator; Gayle Thomas, Supervising Social Worker; and Mike Brown, Board member. The DCFS staff present were: Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director; Elizabeth A. Howard, Children's Services Administrator III; Nestor Figueroa, Children's Services Administrator II; and Dario Villamarin, Children's Services Administrator I.

The purpose of the Review Conference was to grant Refugio the opportunity to discuss the reason for the Administrative Hold. During the Review Conference, Ms. Howard pointed out DCFS concerns as to whether the January 20, 2006 CAP adequately and promptly addresses the A-C's findings. In particular, there appeared to be overall systemic issues with regard to some of the noted findings which Refugio did not address in the CAP. At the Review Conference, Refugio presented a January 23, 2006 written addendum to the CAP and verbally presented further details about the system issues addressed the written addendum, as well as some newly designed forms to effectuate the quality assurance measures outlined.

Upon completion of the CAP addendum review, Refugio was asked to provide backup materials to the CAP and addendum, including an updated organizational chart, a updated Needs and Services Plan form, and a document indicating when and how "spot checks" would occur in the certified foster homes.

Refugio made two requests of DCFS at the Review Conference: 1) To lift the Administrative Hold; and 2) To grant them an exception allowing certified foster parents who have been certified less than one year to provide care for more than two children because the agency specializes in sibling groups.

After attending the Review Conference, examining Refugio's submissions in response to the findings, and discussing the submissions with the A-C's office, it is the Department's decision at this time to place Refugio's FFA program on Do Not Refer status, pending successful completion of the corrective actions discussed at the January 25th Review Conference. Regarding the second request, DCFS will not render



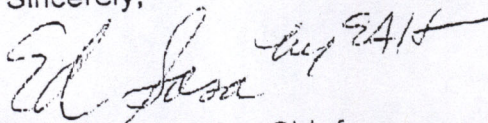
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a final decision until a follow-up report is issued outlining Refugio's accomplishments in implementing the CAP and addendum measures.

Given the reasons stated above and our current concerns regarding adequate quality assurance and children's safety, we are placing Refugio Para Niños Foster Family Agency on Administrative **"DO NOT REFER"** status, pending further action, and to prevent any future placements. The DO NOT REFER status would be in effect as of February 7, 2006.

If you have any questions, please contact me, Ed Sosa, Division Chief, Out-of-Home Care Management Division, at (626) 569-6801.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Sosa", with a flourish extending to the right.

Ed Sosa, Division Chief  
Out-of-Home Care Management Division  
Bureau of Resources

ES:EAH:BH

C: Dr. David Sanders, Director, DCFS  
Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS  
Elizabeth Howard, DCFS  
Nestor Figueroa, DCFS  
Dario Villamarin, DCFS  
Don Chadwick, Auditor-Controller's Office  
Brian Henricks, Auditor-Controller's Office  
Mike Brown, Board of Directors, Refugio



# ATTACHMENT III

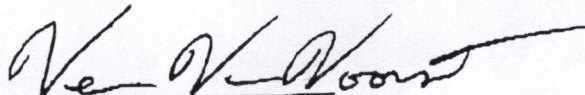
## **REFUGIO PARA NINOS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

### **A Non-Profit Corporation**

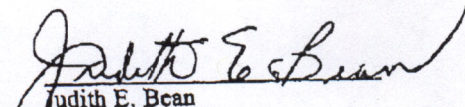
On February 7, 2006, the Board of Directors of Refugio Para Ninos, Foster Family Agency, a California Non-Profit Corporation, met and adopted the following resolution:

**Resolved:** Gayle Thomas be appointed as the Refugio Para Ninos Executive Director for Los Angeles County office, effective 2/7/06.

Board of Directors unanimously approved the resolution.



Vern Van Voorst,  
President/Board of Directors

  
Judith E. Bean  
Board Secretary